

## 2.0 LAND USE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element is the framework of the General Plan. It correlates goals and policies from all the other mandatory and optional elements into a single section. The patterns of development activity and land uses are set forth that will support and enhance the character of the Town. Although, in the eyes of the law, all General Plan elements are of equal importance, the Land Use Element is the most frequently used and referenced section of the General Plan.

Los Gatos is a mature, predominantly built-out community. Many believe there is little room for growth or change in the physical environment. However, land use is dynamic and change is constant from within and without. Controlling change in an effort to maintain our quality of life is a challenge. Disagreements arise when specific development applications are considered or in an overall discussion of growth. Reaching a consensus on issues relating to development is difficult at best, if not impossible.

The Land Use section identifies Issues, Goals, Policies and Implementing Strategies to be used by citizens, staff and decision-makers to ensure that Los Gatos remains special. This section incorporates related issues including traffic and circulation patterns, growth, development, maintenance of neighborhoods and protection of the natural environment. It is not simply a statement of land use patterns typically addressed in a Land Use Element of a General Plan, but rather an overall statement of the use of land and its effects upon the physical environment of the Town of Los Gatos.

All development must comply fully with the General Plan and applicable Specific Plans.

### 2.2 AUTHORITY FOR THE ELEMENT

The State of California Government Code Section 65302(a) requires that a General Plan include:

*"...a Land Use Element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space including agriculture, natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land.*

*The Land Use Element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan."*

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of any of the State required components of the General Plan. In addition to the State's requirements set forth in the Government Code, it has also been legally established that, while the location of a particular land use may be expressed in general terms, a property owner must be able to identify the General Plan designation for his/her parcel from the land use diagram contained in the Land Use Element.

Among the important implementation mechanisms for the Land Use Element are specific plans and the Zoning Ordinance. The California Government Code requires that the Town's Zoning Ordinance and map be consistent with its General Plan Land Use Element and map, and that all provisions of specific plans adopted by the Town must be consistent with the General Plan they implement.

*"We're special. We demand quality of life."  
"...we are victims of our vitality and risk losing the charm and feel that makes Los Gatos such a special place. Whether it is intensification of uses that make the parking situation increasingly difficult, the encroaching of mass and scale on our homes and views, or just the loss of peace and quiet, we are undeniably experiencing communal stress."*

*Mayor Jan Hutchins  
January 1999 State of the  
Town Speech*

## *Land Use Consistency*

### *Transportation Element*

### *Housing Element*

### *Safety Element*

### *Land Use Element*

### *Conservation Element*

### *Open Space Element*

### *Land Use Element*

### *Community Design Element*

Specific Plans  
*The Los Gatos Hillside  
Specific Plan was  
adopted jointly by the  
Town and Santa Clara  
County in 1978 and  
1979 respectively.*

## **2.3 RELATIONSHIP OF LAND USE TO OTHER ELEMENTS AND OTHER PLANS**

As the framework element of this General Plan, the Land Use Element relates directly to all goals and policies of the other elements and unifies the General Plan by providing the overall policy context for the other elements.

- ☐ The Land Use Element addresses circulation by setting out, in its map and policies, the location and size of all roadways in the Town coordinated with the land uses the roads will serve. It also notes the planned capacities of all other infrastructure systems that will be necessary to protect the health and welfare of the Town's citizens.
- ☐ The location, type and density of residential units is a key component of the Land Use Element. The Housing Element uses the density ranges specified in the Land Use Element to identify sites to meet the Town's housing needs.
- ☐ The mandates of the Safety Element are reflected in the designation and location of land use, the permitted activities within designated areas, and the patterns of land use that support defensible space, the Town's contingency plan, and fire and other hazard mitigation.
- ☐ The Land Use Element addresses buffers between noise sensitive uses and noise sources
- ☐ The Town conserves resources through policies for the wise use of land, water, and energy.
- ☐ Air quality is improved by land use patterns that minimize vehicle travel internal to the Town.
- ☐ The Conservation Element goals address protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Programs that retain natural features such as tree preservation, limited grading and water conservation maintain the natural character of Los Gatos.
- ☐ The Open Space Element refers to the location, character and use of parks, recreational facilities and preserved, unimproved land.
- ☐ Land use designations protect and preserve open spaces.
- ☐ The Land Use Element reflects the Town's high priority for quality design
- ☐ Preserving historical buildings, limiting the size of houses and careful design of new in-fill developments protect the built-out character of Los Gatos.
- ☐ California State law requires that all specific plans and zoning regulations be consistent with the General Plan. The Hillside Specific Plan, the North Forty Specific Plan, the Redevelopment Plan and other plans that may be adopted as deemed necessary from time to time will be consistent with this General Plan.

## Residential Uses

*Density Ranges*  
HR-1: 1 - 2.5 acres/ dwelling  
HR-2.5: 2.5 - 10 acres/dwelling  
HR-5: 5 - 40 acres/dwelling  
HR-20: 20 - 160 acres/dwelling  
*Los Gatos Town Code*

## 2.4 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The land use designations serve as a guide to land use potential and must be considered in conjunction with the goals and policies of this General Plan, adopted specific plans, zoning ordinances, development guidelines, regulations and review procedures. The following land use designations appear on the Land Use Map.

- 2.4.1. The following definitions pertain to residential land uses as designated on the Land Use Plan (Figure 2.2).

The designated density ranges express the extreme limits of net densities that are reasonable and desirable for the various areas within the Town boundaries and Sphere of Influence. Determining precise density on any property is a function of subsequent implementation. There is no guarantee that any individual project will be able to achieve the maximum density. Minimum densities are intended to be a floor, except in the event of conflicts with other elements of the General Plan.

Population density standards are expressed in terms of persons per acre (i.e. the product of the number of dwelling units per acre multiplied by the number of persons per dwelling unit). Persons per dwelling unit is assumed to be 3.5 persons for the Hillside and Low Density Residential designations and 2.0 persons for all other residential land uses. Since the number of persons per dwelling unit varies from household to household and may also change over time, the population density standards indicated below must be considered fairly general and flexible.

- a. HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL: 0-1 Dwellings per net acre  
Up to 3.5 persons/acre

The Hillside Residential designation provides for very low density, rural type, large lot or cluster, single-family residential development, and compatible with the unique mountainous terrain and its vegetation.

- b. LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL: 0-5 Dwellings per net acre  
Up to 17.5 persons/acre

The Low Density Residential designation provides for single-family residential properties located on generally level terrain. It encourages single-family residential development in either the standard development established by traditional zoning or by innovative forms obtained through planned development.

- c. MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL: 5 - 12 Dwellings per net acre  
Up to 24 persons/acre

The Medium Density Residential designation provides for multiple-family residential, duplex, and/or small single family homes.

- d. HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL: 12 - 20 Dwellings per net acre  
Up to 40 persons/acre

The High Density Residential designation provides for more intensive multi-family residential development. Its objective is to provide quality housing in close proximity to transit or a business area.

- e. MOBILE HOME PARK: 5-12 Dwellings per net acre  
Up to 24 persons/acre

The Mobile Home Park designation provides for mobile home parks. The intent is to provide and preserve Mobile Home Parks as a source of affordable housing.

## *Non-Residential Uses*

### 2.4.2. The following definitions pertain to non-residential land uses as designated on the Land Use Plan (Figure 2.2).

For non-residential categories, the specific uses mentioned are illustrative only. Restrictions on building intensity are indicated by the allowed land coverage or floor area ratio (FAR) and the maximum height limit. In addition all non-residential land uses are limited by the capacity of the circulation system and available parking. In addition, subject to public review, residential development may be allowed above or behind commercial uses in most of these designations as long as sufficient on-site parking is available for residents without reducing parking available for businesses.

- a. OFFICE PROFESSIONAL: Up to 50% land coverage  
35' height limit

The Office Professional designation provides for professional and general business offices. This designation applies to various locations throughout the Town, often in close proximity to neighborhood or community oriented commercial facilities or as a buffer between commercial and residential uses. The intent of this designation is to satisfy the community's need for general business and professional services and local employment.

- b. CBD - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT: .6 FAR  
45' height limit

The CBD designation applies exclusively to the downtown. This designation:

- ☐ encourages a mixture of community-oriented commercial goods, services and lodging, that is unique in its accommodation of small town style merchants and the maintenance of a small town feel and character;
- ☐ maintains and expands landscaped open spaces and mature tree growth without increasing setbacks;
- ☐ integrates new construction with existing structures of historical or architectural significance and emphasizes the importance of the pedestrian.

- c. MIXED USE COMMERCIAL: Up to 50% land coverage  
35' height limit

The Mixed Use Commercial designation permits a mixture of retail, office, residential in a mixed use setting, along with lodging, service, auto related businesses, non-manufacturing industrial uses, recreational uses and restaurants. Project designs shall maintain the small town, residential scale and natural environments of adjacent residential neighborhoods. Projects developed under this designation shall be designed to provide prime orientation to the major arterial street frontage and proper transitions and buffers to any adjacent residential property. This designation should never be interpreted to allow development of independent commercial facilities with principal frontage on the side streets.

- d. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL: Up to 50% land coverage  
35' height limit

The Neighborhood Commercial designation provides for necessary day-to-day commercial goods and services required by the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods. This designation encourages concentrated and coordinated commercial development at easily accessible locations.

*Preserve and  
Enhance the  
Community  
Character*

- e. SERVICE COMMERCIAL: Up to 50% land coverage  
35' height limit

The Service Commercial designation provides for service businesses necessary for the conduct of households or businesses, such as auto repair, building materials sales, paint suppliers, janitorial services, towing businesses, contractors offices and yards, laundry and dry cleaners,, etc. as well as wholesaling and warehousing activities.

- f. LIGHT INDUSTRIAL: Up to 50% land coverage  
35' height limit

The Light Industrial designation provides for large-scale office developments and selected, well controlled, research and development, industrial park-type and service oriented light industrial uses that are subject to rigid development standards. These uses should respond to community or region-wide needs.

- g. PUBLIC

The Public designation identifies public facilities in the Town such as the Civic Center, court house, schools, parks, libraries, hospitals, churches, and fire stations.

- h. AGRICULTURE

The Agricultural designation identifies areas for the production of commercial agricultural crops.

- i. OPEN SPACE

The Open Space designation identifies the location of public parks, open space preserves, private preserves and stream corridors.

## **2.5 GOALS, POLICIES, IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES**

### **ISSUE: 1**

Los Gatos is distinctive. The small town heritage, natural setting and architectural diversity make our town unique. Preserving these attributes is important to this community. New development should be well-designed to preserve and enhance these attributes. Historic buildings should be preserved.

#### **Goal:**

- L.G.1.1 To preserve, promote, and protect the existing small town character and quality of life within Los Gatos.

#### **Policies:**

- L.P.1.1 Development shall be of high quality design and construction, a positive addition to and compatible with the Town's ambiance. Development shall enhance the character and unique identity of existing commercial and/or residential neighborhoods.
- L.P.1.2 Encourage developers to engage in early discussions regarding the nature and scope of the project and possible impacts and mitigation requirements. These discussions should occur as early as possible in the project planning stage, preferably preceding land acquisition.
- L.P.1.3 Encourage economic and social activity consistent with a small-scale, small town atmosphere and image.

*Conservation  
Element*

*Community  
Design Element  
/ Historic*

- L.P.1.4 Preserve and promote existing commercial centers consistent with the maintenance of a small-scale, small-town atmosphere and image.
- L.P.1.5 Preserve existing trees, natural vegetation, natural topography, and riparian and wildlife habitats, and promote tasteful, high quality, well designed, environmentally conscious and diverse landscaping in new and existing developments.
- L.P.1.6 Encourage mixed use development consisting of residential above or behind non-residential uses in commercial areas.
- L.P.1.7 In-fill projects shall contribute to the further development of the surrounding neighborhood (e.g. improve circulation, contribute to or provide neighborhood unity, eliminate a blighted area, not detract from the existing quality of life).
- L.P.1.8 In-fill projects shall be designed in context with the neighborhood and surrounding zoning with respect to the existing scale and character of surrounding structures, and should blend rather than compete with the established character of the area.
- L.P.1.9 Preserve and protect historic structures including those that have been designated or are contributors in existing historic districts. Use special care in reviewing new buildings or remodels in the vicinity to address compatibility issues and potential impacts.
- L.P.1.10 Continue the Town's careful and proactive historic preservation programs, tempered with compassion and understanding of the property owners' needs, desires and financial capabilities.
- L.P.1.11 Encourage private/public funding, development and operation of cultural amenities, activities and centers consistent with the small town character of Los Gatos.
- L.P.1.12 When the deciding body's decision on a zoning approval is based on assumptions derived from the applicant's promises and/or description of the proposal, those assumptions should become conditions of the approval.
- L.P.1.13 Cooperate with the County of Santa Clara to encourage the annexation of unincorporated islands into the Town. The Town will not require the installation of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, or street lights as a condition of annexation nor will these improvements be imposed on annexed areas after annexation unless the residents of the area request such improvements and are willing to participate in the cost of such improvements. This does not prevent the Town from requiring such improvements as a condition of approval of any zoning or subdivision approval if such conditions are normally made on those items and the improvements would be in keeping with the neighborhood.
- L.P.1.14 Achieve compliance with Town ordinances and regulations through education, incentives, and other proactive measures in addition to issuing citations, collecting fines or other punitive measures.
- L.P.1.15 Recognizing that our ability to preserve our small town character is somewhat dependent on decisions in surrounding communities, take initiative to coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions in the region with respect to land use, transportation, and hillside development.

### **Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.1.1 Architectural Standards/Design Criteria: Use adopted architectural standards and design criteria to review development proposals. Periodically review architectural standards and design guidelines and update as necessary for completeness, clarity, and effectiveness.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.1.2 Neighborhood Meetings: Prepare and distribute with project application information describing guidelines for conducting neighborhood meetings and criteria for reporting the results of neighborhood meetings.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.3 In-fill project/Community Benefit: Applicants for in-fill projects shall demonstrate that the project has a strong community benefit.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.4 In-fill project/Community Benefit: The deciding body shall make specific findings of community benefit before approving any in-fill project.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.1.5 Traffic Impact Policy: Review development applications for consistency with the required findings for Traffic Impact Policy.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Deciding Body
- L.I.1.6 Code Compliance: Maintain a Code Compliance function to effectively enforce the land use regulations in the Town Code.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.7 Code Compliance: Town staff will identify major violations (illegal units, sign violations, illegal uses, tree removals, grading violations, etc.) without waiting for public complaint. Town staff will act on minor violations (illegally parked cars, boats, trailers, and campers, etc.) based on public complaints. Additional violations that may be observed during investigation of a complaint will also be acted upon.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.8 Community Benefit: Amend the Town Code to include a definition of "Community Benefit" that clearly differentiates it from exactions.
- Time Frame: 2000-2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Town Attorney

- L.I.1.9 Historic Preservation: Study amending the Town Code to require proposed developments that are otherwise exempt from historic review but that might have an impact on sites of designated or suspected historic significance, be referred to the Historic Preservation Committee for review and opinion.
- Time Frame: 2002-2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Town Attorney
- L.I.1.10 Zoning Code Update: Perform an audit of the Zoning Code to eliminate outdated sections and insure that all regulations are consistent with this General Plan.
- Time Frame: 2000-2002  
Responsible Party: Planning and Town Attorney
- L.I.1.11 Mixed Use Overlay Zone: Complete a study to analyze a “mixed use” zone or overlay that will include a variety of businesses with differing activity cycles to provide interest and destination points to the residents.
- Time Frame: 2002-2005  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.12 F.A.R.: Complete a study to analyze whether lot coverage regulations in commercial and industrial zones should be replaced or augmented with floor area ratios (F.A.R.).
- Time Frame: 2002-2005  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.13 Community Education: Continue to educate the general community as to quality design and planning practices by sponsoring community forums with expert speakers, design charrettes and seminars.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.14 Story Poles: Require the installation of story poles prior to the approval of new development as required by Town resolution.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.1.15 Continue and expand Town participation in planning processes and decisions in neighboring jurisdictions and regional bodies in order to develop innovative, effective, and coordinated land use, transportation, and hillside development plans and standards that will help preserve our small town character.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Town Council
- L.I.1.16 Complete a study with broad public participation to identify effective ways to invite and increase public participation in the planning process.
- Time Frame: 2001 - 2002  
Responsible Party: Planning



*Residential  
Density vs.  
Building  
Intensity*

- L.I.1.17 Task Forces : Use task forces, ad hoc committees and other means as appropriate to involve residential and commercial interests in Town matters.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

- L.I.1.18 Planning Information: Place on the Town's web site the General Plan, specific plans, the zoning code, the Boulevard Plan, design guidelines and other planning documents.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning

## ISSUE 2

As land prices have increased, lot sizes have become smaller while house sizes have expanded. This intensity of land use gives the impression of a higher density than actually exists.

### Goal:

- L.G.2.1 To limit the intensity of new development to a level consistent with surrounding development and with the Town at large.
- L.G.2.2 To reduce the visual impact that new construction and/or remodeling has on our town and its neighborhoods.
- L.G.2.3 To preserve the quality of the personal open space (yards) throughout the town.

### Policies:

- L.P.2.1 Review all development applications in light of the overall mass and scale of the development.
- L.P.2.2 Balance size and number of units to achieve appropriate (limit) intensity.
- L.P.2.3 Encourage basements and cellars to provide "hidden" sq. ft. In-lieu of visible mass.
- L.P.2.4 Increase building setbacks as mass and height increase.
- L.P.2.5 Maximize quality usable open space in all new developments

### Implementing Strategies:

- L.I.2.1 Maximum Floor Area: Set a maximum total floor area for new subdivisions and planned developments as part of the approval process.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

- L.I.2.2 Relate Yards to Building Height: Research increasing yard setback regulations to include considerations for building height.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning

*Protect  
Residential  
Neighborhoods*

L.I.2.3 BMP Program: Study amending the BMP program to set the required number of units based on the total square footage of a project in addition to the requirement based on a percentage of the number of units.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning

L.I.2.4 Maximum House Size: Consider a maximum house size regulation that incorporates various methods for limiting house size.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning

L.I.2.5 Open Space: Consider specifying the type and increasing the quantity of open space required for new developments.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

L.I.2.6 Limit Floor Area Increase: Limit the amount of increase in the floor area of the remaining units in a project, when the number of units is reduced as part of the development review process.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

L.I.2.7 Building Height: Consider amending the Zoning Code to reduce the maximum allowable building height.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning

### **ISSUE: 3**

Residential neighborhoods in Los Gatos are attractive and well-maintained. Planning for neighborhood preservation and protection is one of the most important purposes of the Town's General Plan. Maintaining neighborhood quality requires: conservation of existing housing, good street design, minimizing and controlling traffic in residential neighborhoods and development review that adheres to quality design. Factors such as the introduction of new or excessive traffic, existing substandard infrastructure or economic pressures may cause disruption of neighborhoods.

#### **Goal:**

L.G.3.1 To maintain the existing character of residential neighborhoods by controlling development.

#### **Policies:**

L.P.3.1 Protect existing residential areas from pressures for non-residential development.

L.P.3.2 Consider nonresidential activity in residential areas only when the character and quality of the neighborhood can be maintained.

L.P.3.3 Protect existing residential areas from adjacent nonresidential uses by assuring that buffers are developed and maintained. Buffers shall be required as conditions of approval and may consist of landscaping, sound barriers, building setbacks or open space.

- L.P.3.4 Prohibit uses that may lead to deterioration of residential neighborhoods, or adversely impact the public safety or the residential character of a residential neighborhood.
- L.P.3.5 Assure that the type and intensity of land use shall be consistent with that of the immediate neighborhood.
- L.P.3.6 Develop and implement appropriate traffic controls to protect residential neighborhoods from the impacts of through traffic such as safety hazards, speeding, noise, and other disturbances.
- L.P.3.7 Allow development only with adequate physical infrastructure (e.g., transportation, sewers, utilities, etc.) and social services (e.g., education, public safety, etc.)
- L.P.3.8 Discourage corridor lots.
- L.P.3.9 Allow alternative uses of sites and facilities of schools, subject to conditions that will protect the surrounding neighborhood.
- L.P.3.10 Allow redevelopment of unused school sites commensurate with the surrounding residential neighborhood and availability of services
- L.P.3.11 Demolitions: In order to reduce land fill, conserve resources, and preserve neighborhood character, demolitions shall be discouraged and applicants shall submit structural reports to determine whether the demolition of any principal structure is justified.

**Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.3.1 Architectural Standards/Design Criteria: Use adopted architectural standards and design criteria to review development proposals.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L I.3.2 In-fill Projects/Community Benefit Applicants for in-fill projects shall demonstrate that the project has a strong community benefit.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.3.3 In-fill Projects/Community Benefit: The deciding body shall make specific findings of community benefit before approving any in-fill project.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.3.4 Demolition of Historic Structures: Refer zoning approvals with demolition of historic structures to Historic Preservation Committee.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.3.5 Traffic Impact Policy: Review development applications for consistency with the required findings for Traffic Impact Policy.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Deciding Body

*Maintain the  
Variety and  
Individual  
Identity of  
Residential  
Neighborhoods*

- L.I.3.6      Planned Developments: Study the appropriateness of permitting Planned Development applications on parcels smaller than 40,000 square feet.
- Time Frame:                      2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party:          Planning
- L.I.3.7      Standards for Non-residential Uses: Develop standards for traffic, noise, intensity and overall size for non-residential uses in residential zones.
- Time Frame:                      2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party:          Planning
- L.I.3.8      Periodic Review of CUP's: The conditional use permit approvals for marginal/alternative(non-residential) uses in residential zones shall be periodically reviewed by the Planning Commission for any adverse impacts, nuisances or any required modifications.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
Responsible Party:          Planning Commission
- L.I.3.9      Corridor Lots: Corridor lots may only be considered if the use of a corridor lot decreases the amount of public street required for the subdivision, contributes to the surrounding neighborhood, and is in context with the existing scale and established character of the neighborhood. The subdivider must also demonstrate that the use of a corridor lot benefits surrounding properties.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
Responsible Party:          Planning
- L.I.3.10     Story Poles: Require the erection of story poles prior to the approval of new development.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
Responsible Party:          Planning

**ISSUE: 4**

One of Los Gatos' most outstanding assets is the visual diversity of its individual neighborhoods. Development represents a variety of architectural styles from various eras, embodying a variety of sizes, design features, and building materials resulting in neighborhoods with their own unique identity. Unique districts or neighborhoods can be the product of an underlying theme or character ( e.g. architectural , cultural, or historical) or can be created by physical barriers (e.g. hillsides, freeways or major streets).

**Goal:**

- L.G. 4.1      To preserve and enhance existing community and neighborhood character and sense of place.

**Policies:**

- L.P.4.1      Continue to encourage a variety of housing types and sizes that is balanced throughout the Town and within neighborhoods and that is also compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- L.P.4.2      Ensure that new development is a positive addition to the Town's environment and does not detract from the nature and character of appropriate nearby established development.

- L.P.4.3 Maintain the character and identity of existing neighborhoods. New construction, remodels, and additions shall be compatible and blend with the existing neighborhood.
- L.P.4.4 Avoid Demolitions. If allowed, the replacement house should be similar in size and scale as the original and maintain the neighborhood character.
- L.P.4.5 Maintain the Town's capacity to meet its housing needs as identified in the Housing Element.
- L.P.4.6 Preserve and protect historic structures and use special care in reviewing new buildings or remodels in their vicinity to address compatibility issues and potential impacts.
- L.P.4.7 Continue the Town's careful and proactive historic preservation programs, tempered with compassion and understanding of the property owners' needs, desires and financial capabilities.

**Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.4.1 Letters of Justification: Require applicants to submit letters of justification to show how new residential development contributes to the balance of types and sizes.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Applicant and Deciding Body
- L.I.4.2 Development Review: Review development proposals against adopted Residential Design Standards.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.4.3 Maintain Neighborhood Character: The deciding body shall use F.A.R. and adopted residential design guidelines to maintain existing neighborhood character.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Historic Preservation Committee
- L.I.4.4 Demolition of Historic Structures: Refer zone change and planned development applications that may result in the demolition of historic structures to the Historic Preservation Committee for review and recommendation.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Historic Preservation Committee
- L.I.4.5 In-fill Findings: Review development applications for consistency with the required findings for In-Fill Policy.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.4.6 Traffic Impact Findings: Review development applications for consistency with the required findings for Traffic Impact Policy.  
  
Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

- L.I.4.7 Winchester Boulevard Rezoning: Consider amending the General Plan's Land Use Element and the Zoning Code to preserve the existing residential uses along Winchester Boulevard between Shelburne Way and Pleasant View.
- Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.4.8 Neighborhood Specific Design Standards: Prepare residential design standards that are neighborhood specific to protect the unique character of various neighborhoods throughout the Town.
- Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Architectural Standards Committee
- L.I.4.9 Design Standards: Prepare design standards for replacement single family dwellings that replicates the size, scale and mass of the original structure.
- Time Frame: 2000 -2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Architectural Standards Committee
- L.I.4.10 New Historic and Conservation Districts: Identify, survey and adopt new historic districts.
- Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Historic Preservation Committee
- L.I.4.11 Identify Alternative Sites to Meet Housing Needs: The Housing Element assumes that sites designated medium and high density residential will be developed at the upper end of the density range. Whenever the Town approves a development at a lower density on one of these sites, one or more other sites should be identified to maintain the Town's capacity to meet its housing needs as identified in the Housing Element, subject to neighborhood compatibility and mitigation of traffic impacts.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.4.12 Story Poles: Require the erection of story poles prior to the approval of new development.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.4.13 Update Design Guidelines: Update and revise the adopted Residential Design Guidelines and consider incorporating illustrations.
- Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.4.14 Update the General Plan's Housing Element after the demographic breakouts of the 2000 census are available.
- Time Frame: 2001 - 2003  
Responsible Party: Planning and Community Services

*Provide a Mix of  
Commercial &  
Industrial Land  
Uses to Maintain  
a Full-Service  
Town*

**ISSUE: 5**

It is important to the economic vitality of the Town and to the general benefit of the residents that goods and services are readily available to the citizens of Los Gatos. If a full range of goods and services are not provided sales tax "leakage" will occur, reducing the Town's fiscal stability

**Goal:**

- L.G.5.1 To provide residents with adequate commercial and industrial services.
- L.G.5.2 To maintain a balanced, economically stable community within environmental goals.

**Policies:**

- L.P.5.1 Maintain a variety of commercial uses (a strong downtown commercial area combined with Los Gatos Boulevard and strong neighborhood commercial centers) to meet the shopping needs of residents and to preserve the small-town atmosphere.
- L.P.5.2 Encourage a mix of retail, office and professional uses in commercial areas, except in the Central Business District where retail should be emphasized.
- L.P.5.3 Require full public review for commercial development to ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods and the Town.
- L.P.5.4 Encourage existing light industry and service commercial uses to remain or be replaced with similar uses.
- L.P.5.5 Encourage the development and retention of locally-owned stores and shops.
- L.P.5.6 Encourage development that maintains and expands resident-oriented services and/or creates employment opportunities for local residents consistent with overall land use policies of the Town.
- L.P.5.7 Only allow land uses for which public costs can be justified by overall community benefit.
- L.P.5.8 "Broadening the tax base" shall never be the sole reason for allowing new commercial development or approving a change in a commercial land use.
- L.P.5.9 Retail sales tax "leakage" should be kept to a minimum by providing in-town convenience and comparative shopping opportunities.

**Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.5.1 Revise CUP Table: Study Conditional Use Permit Table to determine if any changes (deletions or additions) need to be made to list of uses. Considerations should include factors such as size of building and/or floor space occupied, traffic generation and whether the use would dictate a "trademark" style of building.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning, Town Manager and the Chamber of Commerce

*Maintain the  
Historical  
Downtown*

- L.I.5.2 Early Review: Encourage applicants to submit applications to the Conceptual Development Advisory Committee prior to a formal development application submittal.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning
- L.I.5.3 Permit Streamlining: Maintain the Town's permitstreamlining program.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: All Departments
- L.I.5.4 Information Handouts: Develop handouts and informational materials for use by residents and businesses.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning, Building and Engineering
- L.I.5.5 North 40 Specific Plan: Zoning shall be changed as part of development applications to provide consistency with the Vasona Light Rail and Route 85 Element and other elements of this General Plan and with any future specific plan prepared for this area.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Applicants
- L.I.5.6 Identify Needed Businesses: In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, the Town should identify those businesses that are needed in the Town, and actively recruit those businesses.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Town Manager, Redevelopment Agency and the Chamber of Commerce
- L.I.5.7 Fiscal Impacts: Review the fiscal impacts/benefits that proposed projects will have on the Town and local school districts.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body

**ISSUE: 6**

Downtown Los Gatos is the historic heart of the Town. It is the center of the Town's government services and sets the spirit and style of the whole Town. Downtown is unique in Silicon Valley in its architecture, historic small town mixture of goods and services, pedestrian scale and integration of commercial and residential uses. Convenient access and adequate parking are important to the vitality of the downtown, but must be balanced with maintaining the small town character.

**Goal:**

- L.G.6.1 To maintain the historic character of the downtown.
- L.G. 6.2 To preserve downtown Los Gatos as the historic center of the Town with goods and services for local residents while maintaining the existing Town identity, environment and commercial viability.

**Policies:**

- L.P.6.1 Encourage the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, reuse and maintenance of existing buildings.



- L.P.6.2 Encourage the development and retention of small businesses and locally-owned stores and shops that are consistent with small town character and scale.
- L.P.6.3 Consider outdoor seating in restaurants/coffee shops only when the historic character and quality of the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods can be maintained.
- L.P.6.4. Establish and maintain strong boundaries between the CBD and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- L.P.6.5 Recognize and encourage the different functions, land use patterns, and use mixes of the various commercial areas within the downtown. This includes:
- ☐ The pedestrian scale, specialty orientation of the CBD.
  - ☐ The convenience shopping land use pattern of areas north of Saratoga Avenue to about Blossom Hill Road, and
  - ☐ The mixed use commercial activities along Santa Cruz Avenue and the service commercial activities along University Avenue between Andrews, Roberts, and Blossom Hill Roads.
- L.P.6.6 Encourage mixed uses to increase residential opportunities in commercial zones.

**Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.6.1 Threshold Floor Area: Study amending the Town Code to establish a threshold floor area that would require a conditional use permit for new businesses.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005

Responsible Party: Planning

- L.I.6.2 Commercial Rent Mediation: Study whether some form of commercial rent mediation would benefit the community by protecting small businesses and locally owned shops.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005

Responsible Party: Planning

**ISSUE: 7**

Los Gatos residents want to develop Los Gatos Boulevard as a distinct place that enhances the quality of life of the people of Los Gatos through its beauty, economic vitality, and community. Community opinion expressed during the development and adoption of the Los Gatos Boulevard Plan stated that the land uses along Los Gatos Boulevard should create a shopping experience and destinations that complement the characteristics of Downtown.

**Goal:**

- L.G.7.1 To provide a transition from higher intensity uses at the north end of Los Gatos Boulevard at Lark Avenue to existing residential uses at the south end of Los Gatos Boulevard.
- L.G.7.2 To provide clear direction to potential developers.
- L.G.7.3 To encourage redevelopment, possibly including appropriate and compatible re-zoning, of parcels that are experiencing a high vacancy rate.

- L.G.7.4 To promote commercial activity that complements the whole Town.
- L.G.7.5 To provide a dependable source of income, employment opportunities, goods and services.
- L.G.7.6 To encourage a mixture of uses along Los Gatos Boulevard, including where appropriate, mixed-use parcels that are compatible with surrounding uses.
- L.G.7.7 To provide for uses with a family and resident orientation.
- L.G.7.8 To encourage pedestrian amenities, scale, and design.

**Policies:**

- L.P.7.1 New development must be designed in order to minimize adverse impacts upon adjacent residential areas.
- L.P.7.2 Encourage mixed uses to increase residential opportunities in commercial zones.
- L.P.7.3 Retain and enhance auto dealerships.
- L.P.7.4 Auto related uses currently existing shall be allowed to remain indefinitely.
- L.P.7.5 New and relocating auto-related businesses shall be located a) north of Los Gatos - Almaden Road, b) adjacent to existing auto dealerships, or c) on a vacant site previously used for permitted auto sales.
- L.P.7.6 Neighborhood commercial, multi-family residential and office uses shall be concentrated south of Los Gatos - Almaden Road.
- L.P.7.7 Uses on Los Gatos Boulevard south of Shannon Road shall be residential or office; existing non-residential uses shall not be intensified and existing vacant property and residential uses shall be developed as Single Family Residential.
- L.P.7.8 Commercial and mixed use development north of Lark shall be in keeping with the Vasona Light Rail and Route 85 Element, the North 40 Specific Plan (when adopted) and shall provide/incorporate Boulevard, Downtown and regional transit access accordingly.
- L.P.7.9 Establish and maintain strong boundaries between the commercial uses along Los Gatos Boulevard and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- L.P.7.10 New landscaping, streetscape as well as new development shall be designed to encourage pedestrian use.

**Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.7.1 Commercial Image: Work with existing auto dealers and other commercial property owners and merchants to develop an appropriate commercial image specifically for Los Gatos Boulevard.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Town Manager and Chamber of Commerce

- L.I.7.2      Development Review Process:    Revise the development review process for exterior improvements to existing buildings to allow approval by staff subject to compliance with Los Gatos Boulevard Design Standards.
- Time Frame:                      2000 - 2005  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning
- L.I.7.3      Architectural Standards/Design Criteria:    Use adopted Los Gatos Boulevard Design Standards to review development proposals.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.7.4      Land Use Policy:    Develop land use policy to provide clear direction to potential developers.
- Time Frame:                      2000 - 2005  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning and Town Council
- L.I.7.5      Los Gatos Boulevard Plan:    Implement the Los Gatos Boulevard Plan.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning, Engineering and Public Works
- L.I.7.6      Promotional Sales Activities:    Allow auto dealers and other commercial property owners and merchants to conduct occasional promotional sales activities with a "festival" atmosphere with appropriate restrictions to reduce traffic congestion and impacts on neighboring commercial and residential uses.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning
- L.I.7.7      Pedestrian/bike Links:    Provide more pedestrian/bike areas and links to adjacent residential areas to foster neighborhood use of commercial centers.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning, Engineering and Public Works
- L.I.7.8      North of Los Gatos-Almaden Road:    Encourage new or relocating auto-related businesses to relocate to available property north of Los Gatos-Almaden Road.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Town Manager, Planning and Chamber of Commerce
- L.I.7.9      Seven Mile Reservoir:    Explore use of "air space" over Seven Mile Reservoir for landscaped open passive open space.
- Time Frame:                      2000 - 2005  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning, Parks and Public Works
- L.I.7.10     South of Los Gatos - Almaden Road:    Encourage replacement of vacated business south of Los Gatos - Almaden Road with neighborhood commercial, multi-family, or office uses.
- Time Frame:                      On-going  
                 Responsible Party:       Planning

*Maintain the  
Natural  
Environmental  
Setting*

**ISSUE: 8**

Los Gatos is outstanding in its respect for the natural environment. The Santa Cruz Mountains are a major natural feature and form the backdrop for Los Gatos. Maintaining the tree cover, the creeks, streams and riparian corridors, and accommodating wildlife is a major part of the community's identity.

**Goal:**

- L.G.8.1 To preserve the natural topography and ecosystems within the Town's Sphere of Influence.
- L.G.8.2 To promote a sustainable community by protecting environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Policies:**

- L.P.8.1 Preserve the Town's distinctive and unique environment by preserving and maintaining the natural topography, wildlife and vegetation and by mitigating and reversing the harmful effects of traffic congestion, pollution and environmental degradation on our urban landscape.
- L.P.8.2 Limit Hillside development to that specified in the Hillside Specific Plan. Minimize development and preserve and enhance the rural atmosphere and natural plant and wildlife habitats in the hillside.
- L.P.8.3 Preserve and protect the natural state of the Santa Cruz Mountains and surrounding hillsides, by, among other things discouraging development on and near the hillsides as well as development that blocks the views of the hillsides.
- L.P.8.4 Emphasize preserving the natural land forms by minimizing grading. Grading should be limited only to the area needed to place the main house on the property.
- L.P.8.5 Allow development that is only environmentally suitable to such use.
- L.P.8.6 Preserve existing creeks and riparian habitat in as natural state as possible.
- L.P.8.7 When a development project is adjacent to a creek, the approval shall include a condition that the creek be dedicated to the Town in fee with a maintenance easement granted to the Santa Clara Valley Water District.
- L.P.8.8 Existing specimen trees shall be preserved and protected as a part of any development proposal.
- L.P.8.9 Encourage innovative and efficient management of natural resources.
- L.P.8.10 Limit hillside development to that which can be safely accommodated by our rural two lane roads.
- L.P.8.11 Encourage the use of scenic easements to preserve viewsheds.
- L.P.8.12 Work with Santa Clara County to ensure that projects developed in the County meet Town policies and standards, do not induce further development, and do not unduly burden the Town.

### **Implementing Strategies:**

- L.I.8.1 Grading Permits: Require Architecture and Site approval for grading permits.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- L.I.8.2 Grading Permits: Require grading permits to insure that the grading of slopes and sites proposed for development will be minimized.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- L.I.8.3 Story Poles: Require the erection of story poles prior to the approval of new development.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning

- L.I.8.4 Limit Impervious Surfaces: Revise Town codes to limit the impervious surfaces in most zones. Alternative materials and designs shall be encouraged for driveways, parking areas and parking lots in all zones except the C-2 zone. Examples include but are not limited to: "ribbon strip" driveways (pavement in tire areas, grass or gravel in the middle), pervious paving material, gravel surface for overflow parking lots. Design parking lots to drain into landscaped areas.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- L.I.8.5 Limit Size of Hillside Houses: Amend the Town Code to limit the size of houses in the hillside area.

Time Frame: 2000-2001  
Responsible Party: Planning and Architectural Standards and Hillside Committee

- L.I.8.6 Hillside Development Standards: The Town shall continue to work with the County in updating hillside development standards, and annexations shall be encouraged within the Urban Service Boundary.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning

- L.I.8.7 Landscape Design Standards: Prepare landscape design standards that are environmentally conscious, maximize the use of native and drought-tolerant species, and encourage well planned planting schemes, that include appropriate sized plant material in sufficient density to add to the thoughtfulness and beauty of the Town.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Parks

- L.I.8.8 Open Space: Maximize preservation of open space and scenic vistas by requiring dedications in fee (preferred) or easements and by restricting buildable areas on lots. Where buildable areas are restricted through clustering, planned developments, or other means, these means shall not allow higher overall density on the parcel than would otherwise be allowed by the zoning. Dedications should be made jointly to Town and Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Parks
- L.I.8.9 Open Space: Sponsor an existing agency or create a new agency to encourage private property owners to dedicate open space easements to the Town.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Town Manager
- L.I.8.10 Hillside Design Standard: Houses shall be designed to step down the contours rather than be designed for flat pads.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Architectural Standards Committee
- L.I.8.11 Ridge lines: Review all subdivisions and house plans to avoid having structures project above the ridge lines when seen from the valley floor. Avoid grading that would alter the natural ridge line.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Deciding Body
- L.I.8.12 Grading Moratorium: Prohibit grading in hillside areas between October 1 and April 15. Install interim erosion control measures shown on the approved interim erosion control plan by October 1.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering
- L.I.8.13 Soils and Geologic Reports: For projects with potential grading, erosion and sediment control problems, soils and geologic reports will be provided during the development review process.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning, Building and Engineering
- L.I.8.14 Geologic Reports: Require geologic reports to specify construction methods to protect the proposed project as well as existing residences in the vicinity from identified hazards.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Applicant, Planning, Building and Engineering
- L.I.8.15 Environmental Impact Reports: Staff should err on the side of requiring an Environmental Impact Report to ensure adequate consideration of environmental concerns associated with projects.
- Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning

L.I.8.16 Reverse and prevent harmful development impacts: The Town shall design and implement programs and procedures to mitigate the effects of past developments, and to review and prevent or mitigate the impacts of future development on community sustainability.

Time Frame: On-going  
Responsible Party: Planning